

My Ref: T: Scrutiny/PRAP/Comm Papers/Correspondence

Date: 8 May 2014



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Councillor Phil Bale  
Leader, Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
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Dear Councillor Bale,

## **POLICY REVIEW & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6 May 2014 Organisational Change Draft Cabinet Report**

On behalf of the Committee, thank you for attending the Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee to enable pre-decision scrutiny of the draft 'Organisational Change' Cabinet report. Please also pass Members' thanks to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance, the Chief Executive and the Assistant Director for Sport, Leisure and Culture.

There is an evident recognition, shared by this Committee, that the Council needs to change, partly in response to external pressures, but also in order to address its internal challenges. The draft report sets out a frank opinion that Cardiff Council is currently characterised by a 'top down, silo-based approach to service delivery', an assessment which several Committee members recognised. The Committee therefore welcomed the proposal to implement an Organisational Development programme. However, we will look to see its outcomes and potential cashable savings more clearly set out as the scope of the workstreams and projects is defined, given that a considerable fund of £1.7 million has been set aside for this work.

There are – as highlighted during the meeting – a number of areas that will be tackled by the Programme to which this Committee has drawn attention in the past. Among others, these include employee and public engagement; workforce planning; asset management; performance management; web and customer management. The Committee looks forward to scrutinising those workstreams, service reviews and projects which fall under its remit in more depth, to provide support and challenge as the Programme progresses. We will start on our Committee work programming after Annual Council, so will look to schedule items at appropriate points. I'm confident that you will agree that Scrutiny engagement will be crucial to the Programme's development and implementation.

Members queried whether there was still an appetite for change within the Council particularly below Operational Manager level. We hope that the Employee Engagement project will provide a sustained mechanism to make the most of the valuable experience and knowledge of Council staff, as well as to gauge staff opinion and morale. As highlighted by one Member, staff should be part of a team identifying and taking ownership of issues and helping to develop solutions. We would like to



consider the results of forthcoming engagement activity as relevant as we consider Organisational Development projects in more depth.

The Committee noted the emphasis on a Strategic Commissioning approach contained in the report and recommend that as proposals develop you engage fully with relevant Scrutiny Committees. Members further recommend that a strong 'feedback' mechanism is built into the Commissioning cycle. Communities need to know that we have taken ideas on board and acted as appropriate, once we have analysed their needs. However, the Committee welcomes the overall focus on engaging communities in the design, and potentially the delivery, of services. We recommend that the Cabinet considers bringing together a team within the Council to enable and support communities in developing alternative delivery method proposals. This could draw upon expertise already within the Council, for example Finance, Legal, Procurement, and Grants officers, as well as Learning, Training & Enterprise and Neighbourhood officers. Such a team could assist in identifying and developing suitable models for the delivery of a particular service, give advice on accessing funding and information, and act as a central contact point. We would hope that such a team could be a valuable resource in building links with communities, developing community capacity and ensuring a smooth transition of services where necessary.

The Committee further supports the establishment of a 'Cardiff Debate', having as you will recall, emphasised the need for effective citizen engagement on many occasions when you sat on the Committee. As stated above, Members are clear that effective community engagement must involve a feedback mechanism to demonstrate where engagement has resulted in change. We also hope that the Debate will aim to hear from a wide-range of citizens and communities, and not just the 'usual suspects'.

In terms of the resourcing of the Programme, the Committee would like more clarity, in order to determine the potential impact on the delivery of other services, given that capacity is already stretched in some Directorates. We would also like to have greater understanding of the Earmarked Reserve which has been established and what is meant by 'technical, professional and specialist support'.

In terms of the Peer Challenge Group, the Committee recommends that its Terms of Reference are further refined. If its remit is to provide 'advice', 'challenge', 'critical friendship' and signposting to good practice, then, as Members commented at the meeting, the Committee feels that an external Chair should be appointed to ensure that the Group provides an independent voice. Members also recommend that a formalised reporting mechanism should be established to both formal Cabinet business meetings and this Committee, so that there is wider corporate and public visibility and opportunity for shared learning from the Group's advice. Finally, the Committee felt that the frequency of meetings should be formally set out, rather than left to be scheduled 'as required' to ensure that the Group's momentum is kept up.

There are several recommendations and requests for further information included in this letter, so I would be grateful for your response. Thank you again for attending the Committee meeting and I look forward to working with you in future as these initiatives develop further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Howells', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**COUNCILLOR NIGEL HOWELLS  
CHAIR, POLICY REVIEW AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

cc Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance  
Paul Orders, Chief Executive  
Martin Hamilton, Assistant Director – Sport, Leisure and Culture  
Cabinet Office  
Members of the Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee

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